

CLIPPINGS FOR THE CURIOUS.

The first street-car line in the world was the Fourth avenue line to Harlem, opened in New York in 1832.

At Stalvenfels-on-the-Rhine there is an ancient church reduced to ruins through a law-suit about tithes, which lasted forty years.

Rats in a mine give warning of danger by running about uneasily, and in great numbers. The miners are inclined to treat them with great kindness.

In 1816 Lord Schorwerby gave 16,595 francs for a tooth of Isaac Newton, which is now set in a ring and worn by the eldest branch of that family.

The oldest tree on earth is probably the cypress of Santa Maria del Tule, in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. It is still growing, and in 1851 it measured forty-two feet in diameter.

Among the Romans of the first and second centuries were certain societies called Collette, the members of which took their meals in common, and by regular payments prepared a fund for their burial and for festival.

There are at present no fewer than ten establishments in France devoted to the propagation of bait for the use of anglers, and one of these breeders sells from 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 of worms per annum, deriving a handsome income from the business.

Four empires were constituted from the fragments of that of Alexander. Seleucus, Nicator had control of the countries between the Mediterranean and the Indus; Lysimachus of Thrace and Asia Minor; Cassander of Macedonia and Greece; and Ptolemy of Egypt.

Among the antique articles in possession of Mr. Sewell, of Maine, are a set of pewter plates bearing the seal of King Richard and supposed to be more than 400 years old; also, one large silver spoon, which represents all the money received for building a saw and grist mill—the payment having been made in silver and then cast into the spoon.

When Darius set out upon his famous expedition against Athens, in 492 B.C., he took with him a block of marble to be set up as a monument of his victory; but by order of the people, after the battle of Marathon, Phidias cut this into a statue of Nemesis. The arms and shields gathered from the field were melted and cast into a statue of Pallas, which was placed on the Acropolis.

A number of years ago Henry Clay was presented with a cane. The staff is of live oak cut from a tree that overshadowed the tomb of Cicero; and the head is made of very antique, obtained from the house of Columbus, at Genoa. It is octagonal, and ornamented with exquisite medals of those two famous orators of ancient and modern times—Rome's Cicero and America's Clay.

In what is claimed to be the most delicate pair of scales in the world, according to the account given in the scientific papers, the beam is made of rye straw, and together with the pans, which are made of aluminum, weighs only fifteen grains. In the most delicate scale heretofore made the beam and pan weighed sixty-eight grains, the beam being made of aluminum, and the instrument was capable of weighing to the 1-1000 of a grain. This new scale, however, weighs to the 1-10,000 of a grain. A piece of hair one inch long, on being weighed with this wonderful apparatus, was found to represent the almost infinitesimal quantity of 1-1000 of a grain.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

On the day of victory no weariness is felt.

A wise man reflects before he speaks, and reflects on what he has uttered.

The head, however strong it may be, can accomplish nothing against the heart.

The most important part of every business is to know what ought to be done.

It is better to be reproached by a friend than complimented by a flatterer.

The wise man looks for happiness beyond the narrow ken of personal interest.

Infinite toil would not enable you to sweep away a mist, but by ascending a little you may often look over it altogether.

Never leave what you undertake until you can reach your arms around it and clench your hands on the other side.

You can't judge of the value of a man by his talk any more than you can judge of the value of the tree by its bark.

One should be careful not to carry any of his follies of youth into old age; for old age has follies enough of its own.

Do not despise the opinion of the world; you might as well say that you care not for light of the sun because you can use a candle.

Some minds are so constructed as not to be amenable to the ordinary rules of judgment; they deserve pity rather than censure.

Sorrow itself is not so hard to bear as the thought of sorrow coming. Airy ghosts that work no harm do terrify us more than men in steel with bloody purpose.

CATCHING A GHOST.

A Philadelphia Detective's Story.

Detective skill is not frequently invoked to solve matters outside of the profession. The better class of secret agents decline such cases, but "side and sneak detectives" are delighted to have the handling of all such.

The case about to be narrated, while not in the regular line, was undertaken by reason of intimate personal relations, and eventually led up to legitimate detective work. The lady, whose husband was a commercial traveler for a large New York house, was in a highly excited condition; indeed it was owing alone to her indomitable spirit that she was able to remain out of bed.

I do not much wonder at the young wife's consternation, for the case was a very mysterious one, as the reader will confess. Mr. Blaque has been absent some weeks somewhere in the far west, but just where was not known, and it was this fact that caused Mrs. Blaque's greatest agitation when coupled with the singular manifestations.

Mrs. Blaque in the last ten days had been using the second story front room of her house as a sitting room. One evening, wearied with reading, she moved her chair from the open grate, and leaned her head against the wall, so she said; but I judge from subsequent facts that she had been making love to the fine photograph of her husband which hung upon the wall. She heard this appalling announcement uttered in a sepulchral voice:

"Kill the dog, Blaque!" At the same moment the picture fell to the floor, and as I suppose, from her hand. The glass was broken. There are many people who are sure the breaking of a looking-glass is a certain portent of sudden death in the family, and while this did not fill the "condition" because it was not a mirror, it none the less occupied her mind with the idea that this event was a certain token of her husband's death.

Mrs. Blaque was brave enough, however, to place her head close to the wall again, and heard the most diabolical noises—noises like the like of which she never heard. The spoken words, as well as the sounds which followed, seemed to proceed from some deep subterranean cavern.

Mrs. Blaque hastily left the room, and did not venture back during that evening. Several times during the next day she repeated her experiment, but heard nothing, and were it not for the broken glass she might have persuaded herself that it was imagination. Recovering her self-possession somewhat, she ventured the next night to seat herself as before, but up within a few minutes of 11 o'clock heard no further disturbances.

She had the glass replaced, and once more it was suspended from the wall. An evening or two afterward she read until late, and, I imagine, pressed a good-night kiss on the portrait of her husband. She heard the uncanny racket, and continued listening to this for some moments, when the awful announcement was made: "He is dead!"

Some other words there were, the purport of which she did not catch; and soon after the house seemed filled with shrieks and hollow reverberations. These made her blood run cold, and she fled from the room. She had the coachman sleep in the apartment all that night and every succeeding night. With the return of daylight she felt somewhat braver, and resolved to make another experiment before she made known her fears. The fact that these disturbances occurred about midnight only served to indicate their supernatural origin.

The third trial was made about 12 o'clock, when Mrs. Blaque had her maid by her side. No sooner had the lady taken down the picture and placed her ear to the spot it covered than the blood-curdling din began, which she described as the mingling of noises by drawing heavy iron chains over zinc or tin and ear-piercing shrieks from demon lips. It was some time before she heard any words, and those caught were "Blaque, Blaque." Then she heard something about "bones rotting," which of course she concluded were her husband's and no other.

The awful import of this revelation overcame her and she fainted. She could stand it no longer, and the next day sent for me, as being one of her husband's nearest friends. That night, with one of my subordinates, I called at the house and began the investigation. Between eleven and twelve I heard the dreadful sounds as described by the lady. I was nonplussed, for I could find no reasonable hypothesis on which to base a theory. I heard some words but could distinguish nothing but the one word Blaque. I obtained permission to attack the wall, and in a short time had several bricks removed. I uncovered a small tin flue, with a triumphant cry, "There is the secret of your ghost!" I pointed it out to Mrs. Blaque, but was surprised to observe she was far from being satisfied.

Going down to the cellar we discovered the pipe had an outlet there, it belonging to some now disused system of ventilation. The passage was free was easily demonstrated by dropping pebbles. Again the terrible noises were heard, this time more distinct than before. The discovery of this passage, however, did not solve the mystery.

Where did the voice and the noises come from? They were not made in Madame's house, that was clear, and I began to fear I was far away from the secret as ever.

Making some excuse, I left the room, and proceeded to examine the house, along the row, some six or seven being all alike in design. At each of the gratings I listened carefully. At the second house I observed that unusual precautions had been taken to prevent outsiders from peeping inside. Here, too, I heard peculiar sounds, which resembled rasping, and by placing my ear close to the wall, heard the indistinct rumble of voices. I next rung the door-bell, but obtained no answer.

Returning to Mrs. Blaque's house, my operative repeated parts of several sentences he obtained, one of which spoke of the door bell. More important than this was the name "Southgate Bank," which he affirmed he caught distinctly.

After assuring Mrs. Blaque that I would explain the whole matter inside of twenty-four hours, and leaving my man on guard, I hastened to the office and made arrangements to have the second house shadowed. I called next day on the cashier of the Southgate Bank, and found that the watch dog had been found dead some days before.

To close the whole matter I may as well explain that the noises were made by filing and sharpening iron tools with which a gang of robbers meant to break into the safe of the Southgate Bank. This work was done in the cellar, and immediately above the bench on which the work was progressing there was an opening in the wall through which another ventilating pipe ran until it opened out into the upright shaft in Mrs. Blaque's house. This conveyed the sounds as well as added to the mysterious quality of tone.

The excited woman had mistaken the word bank for Blaque, and the "rotting bones" referred to the dog, which these rascals had poisoned preliminary to effecting an entrance into the bank. This was the ghostly voice accounted for, and the incident goes to prove what an influence our thoughts and our brains have upon other senses. It only remains to add the fact that the gang were subsequently allowed to enter the bank, were caught in the very act of breaking the safe, and finally "sent up" for an appropriate term of years. No one outside knew, nor did the thieves guess, that they had revealed their secrets to a ghost-catcher.

Buried Alive.

Burying people alive in Europe has occurred too often of late years, and can only be accounted for by the inattention of doctors, which, in this case, should be treated as a criminal offense. The fear of the living of being buried alive has gained such power over the mind that Russians, when on their death-bed, have left legacies for the foundation and maintenance of mortuaries in their native city, where supposed corpses are placed for three days in the hopes that their thread of life may not have parted. The mortuary of Erlburg can be quoted as an instance of these peculiar institutions, which are confined principally to Eastern Europe, where cataleptic fits are more prevalent than in any other part of the globe.

In the centre of the cemetery of Erlburg stands a house which, to an observant person, would have every appearance of a small chapel. This thought would be suggested through the sight of a tower, which contains a bell; but, on entering this lilliputian building, the searcher for knowledge might be astonished at seeing a human form, dead to all appearance. The stiff, rigid body rests upon a marble slab, dressed in death's garments, and the rings, which depend from a wire rope that runs through the ceiling, are attached to its fingers. A further inspection, aided by the theory of the apparatus which the genial attendant is willing to give to all visitors, would explain this somewhat mysterious position of the dead body. The fingers of the supposed corpse are placed in magnetic rings that fit tightly. Should the body show any signs of reanimation, the slightest quiver of the nerves of the fingers would affect the steel rings, which in their turn communicate with another stronger magnetic current that forces itself on the bell, making it toll, which brings an attendant physician to the rescue. By this several bodies placed in this mortuary since 1865 have returned to life. A peasant woman, named Pekofoff, recently walked from her tomb on the third day after burial.

Samson's Strength.

Abundant hair is not a sign of bodily or mental strength, the story of Samson having given rise to the notion that hairy men are strong physically, while the fact is that the Chinese, who are mostly bald, and as to the supposition that long and thick hair is a sign and token of intellectuality, all antiquity, all mad-houses and all common observation are against it. The easily wheedled Esau was hairy. The mighty Caesar was bald. Long-haired men are generally weak and fanatical, and men with scant hair are the philosophers and soldiers and statesmen of the world.

—London Lancet.

THE HOME DOCTOR.

Hygiene of the Teeth.

A hard crust is the best possible dentifrice. I never could get myself to believe in the natural necessity of a tooth-brush. The African nations, the Hindus, the natives of Southern Europe, the South Sea Islanders, the Arabs, the South American vegetarians, in short, three-fourths of our fellow-men, besides our next relatives, the frugivorous animals, have splendid teeth without sozodon. I really believe that our decay from sheer disuse; the boarding-house homo lives chiefly on pap—wants all his meats soft-boiled, and grows at cold biscuit or an underdone potato; in other words, he delegates to the cook the proper functions of his teeth. We hear occasionally of old men getting a second, or rather third, set of teeth. I met one of them in Northern Guatemala, and ascertained that he had become toothless during a twelve years' sojourn in a seaport town, and that he got his new set upon his return to his native village, where circumstances obliged him to resume the hard corn-cake diet of his boyhood years. His teeth had reappeared, as soon as their services were called for, and would probably never have absented themselves if a pap-diet had not made them superfluous. An artificial dentifrice will certainly keep the teeth white, but that does not prevent their premature decay; disuse gradually softens their substance, till one fine day the hash-eater snaps his best incisor upon an unexpected piece of bone. Every dentist knows hundreds of city customers who, the daily use of a tooth brush did not save from the necessity of applying, before the end of the fortieth year, for a complete "collodized set." I do not say that a soft tooth brush and such dentifrices as oatmeal or burned arrowroot can do any harm, but, for sanitary purposes, such precautions must be supplemented by dental exercise. Let a child invigorate its teeth by chewing a hard crust, or, better yet, a handful of "St. John's bread" or carob beans, the edible pod of the mimosa silqua. Children and whole tribes of the northern races seem to feel an instinctive desire to exercise their teeth upon some solid substance; as pet squirrels will gnaw the furniture if you give them nut kernels instead of nuts. Thus Kohl tells us that the natives of Southern Russia are addicted to the practice of chewing a vegetable product which he at first supposed to be pumpkin or melon seeds, but found to be the much harder seed of the Turkish sunflower (heliatus perennis). Their national diet consists of milk, kukuruz (hominy, with butter, etc.), and boiled mutton, and they seem to feel that their Turkoman jaws need something more substantial. The schoolboy habit of gnawing pen-holders, finger-nails, etc., may have a similar significance. The mimosa silqua would yield abundantly in our Southern States, and its sweet pods would make an excellent substitute for chewing. Our practice of sipping ice-cold and stinging-hot drinks, turn about, has also a very injurious effect upon the brittle substance that forms the enamel of our teeth; no porcelain glaze would stand such abuse for any length of time, and experience has taught hunters and dog fanciers that it destroys even the bone-crushing fangs of the animal from which our canine teeth derive their name.—Popular Science Monthly.

Lost Their Breakfast.

A departure from the synod of Cleimaclev, while on their way to the annual meeting of the general assembly, had started by coach at an early hour and had to travel some twenty miles before they reached the inn where breakfast was prepared for them. The keen air of our northern hills sharpens the appetite, and when the brethren drove up to the inn they were almost famished with hunger. "Now, gentlemen, just ten minutes for breakfast," said the coachman, as he entered the landlady's snug parlor to have his own. Ten minutes! The time was short, so they must make the most of it. They rushed into the room where breakfast was spread, and there, looking at his ample person before the fire, stood a portly gentleman, dressed somewhat like a dignitary of the Church of England. The appetite was keener than their curiosity, so they scarcely looked at the stranger, but concentrated all their attention on the viands. Half way in the air, before the morsel had reached their lips, their hands were arrested by a sudden cry of "Stop!" It was the supposed Dean of Ripon. "Good heavens, gentlemen!" he exclaimed, "have you so far forgotten your sacred profession as to partake of food without invoking a blessing?" The brethren looked like schoolboys detected in some flagrant fault; but before they had time to remonstrate or explain the same voice explained in a tone which forced obedience: "Let us pray." They instinctively sprang to their feet and assumed an attitude of devout devotion, while the stranger offered up a prayer which they themselves admitted was superior in union and expression to those of Dr. D. himself. He had only one fault—he did not know when to stop. The minutes rolled rapidly away, but the stream of fervent supplication flowed on without a break. They had a terrible struggle, the brethren had, as they closed one eye in devotion and the other; but whenever a hand approached the table it drew back before the stern glance of the stranger, which seemed to comprehend them all. The sufferings of Tantalus were nothing to the sufferings of the deputation from the synod of Cleimaclev; but all things must come to an end. "Time is up, gentlemen!" said the coachman, opening the door and wiping his mouth with the air of a man who has enjoyed his breakfast. The appearance of the coachman and the sound of his familiar voice broke the spell; but there was no time to be lost; the horses were shaking their heads and pawing the ground in their impatience to start; so they had to take their seats and to turn breakfast and dinner into one. "Was that the Bishop of D—?" said one of the famished brethren. "That the Bishop of D—?" said the coachman, contemptuously; "why, that was Lord P— the golden wag in all the kingdom."—Golden Rule.

A bad sign—A forged signature.

CAUSE FOR APPREHENSION.

Why Mysterious Physical Troubles Arise.

Few things give more pain than sudden apprehensions. Most people are able to face apparent danger heroically, but the sudden and unexpected coming of some indefinite calamity very naturally strikes terror to the heart. It is not the lightning and tornadoes are considered terrible; their coming and going are so sudden, unannounced and unknown. For this same reason an unknown disease, some poison in the blood, some malarial that is gradually undermining the life, is specially dreaded by all thinking people. And, indeed, there are good reasons for such dread, for modern science has discovered that some violent disorders show the least signs in their beginnings, while they have the worst possible approach. Many persons who have had dull and uncertain pains in various portions of the body; who are unaccountably tired one day and apparently well the next; who have an anxious appetite at times and a loathing of food soon thereafter. Such persons are really in a dangerous condition, even though they may not realize it. The following statement of a prominent physician, who has had unusual opportunities for investigation, is of so striking and important a nature that it will be read with interest by all:

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